

## William Berkeley Lewis to Andrew Jackson, January 13, 1818, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

Washington, January 13, 1818.

*D. General* , Yours of the 8th ultimo has this moment been received. It reached this place in my absence, on a visit to Philadelphia, or I should have written to you much earlier. I am pleased that you have come to the determination of paying no further attention to the *champion* of Kentucky's *honor* . 1 Believe me, my dear Sir, that he is totally unworthy of your notice; he is the mere cats-paw of a certain faction in, and about, Lexington, and all his present consequence is intirely derived from this controversy with you. Whether the Kentuckians on the right bank of the Mississippi ran like frightened deer, or faught like bull dogs, is to him a mere matter of moon-shine. Who is it so blind, who so silly, as not to perceive that self aggrandisement is his object? No my dear Genl. you *ought not* to take any further notice of him; reserve your talents and your life for the benefit of your country, which, from the present appearance of affairs, may again need them.

1 Brig.-Gen. John Adair; see *Letters of General Adair and General Jackson, relative to the Charge of Cowardice* , etc. (Lexington, 1817).

As it regards your order, I flatter myself, there will be no difficulty about that. The Secretary at war has already, at the instance of the president, issued an order recognising the principles, I believe, in extenso, for which you have been contending. This order I think ought to be satisfactory to you, and I have no doubt but it will. The President, no doubt, has seen the propriety of such a regulation; and I am sure, if I know the man, no one can be more desirous of facilitating the operations of government than he is; or would be more unwilling to deprive officers of the government of their just rights. You may rest assured

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that no exceptions will be taken, by the president, to that order, ho[w]ever much it may be denounced by Factionists and Tools: The publication of the order, above alluded to, must overwhelm such minions with confusion and shame.

That you are friendly to the president I cannot doubt, and of that, I believe, Mr. Monroe himself is perfectly satisfied; nor can I doubt but your friendship is mutual. I think I am authorised in stating that the president entertains for you the highest personal regard; nor do I believe there is any danger, of the least possible diminution of that regard.

You talk of resigning. Permit me, with deferential respect for that opinion, to oppose such a determination. I am sure your resignation would be recd. with unfeigned regret by the president, at any time or under any circumstances, and particularly so at the present crisis when our affairs in the South are rather ominous; indeed, when the whole world is in a very unsettled state. Within a very short period, for aught we know the world may again be in arms; and arrive that time when it may this country will inevitably be drawn into the vortex. And will you under these circumstances desert your friend, the president, who relies on your services and your support? I can answer for you—I know your heart too well—I know you are incap[a]ble of withdrawing from your friend in the hour of need. You will not, I am sure, on reflection, you will not resign at the present time. The president is your friend and does not wish it; and why would you do the very thing which above all others, those whom you consider your enemies most desire? Do you not believe that the news of your resignation would be recd. by them with silent, if not avowed satisfaction? And yet you feel disposed to gratify them! Reflect upon this measure—dont be too precipitate.

As for Crawford I am unable to say what are his sentiments towards you. Knowing as I do, the circumstances of your differences I should certainly conclude that he is by no means your friend; nor do I believe him friendly to any of the people about Nashville, not even my humble self. But our friend Mr. Rhea is of opinion that Mr. Crawford is not inimical to you. 2 He has never disclosed to me the grounds for such an opinion; perhaps he may have reasons that will justify him in coming to such a conclusion. If it is a fact that Mr. Crawford

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is not unfriendly to you, it is a circumstance that ought, at least, to lessen your acrimony towards him. There are few tho', I imagine, that know what Mr. Crawfords feelings are upon this subject.

2 See vol. II., p. 336.

By placing Mr. Calhoon at the head of the dept. of war <sup>3</sup> I hope most of the difficulties of which you have heretofore complained will be removed.

3 Calhoun had entered on his duties as Secretary of War on Dec. 10, 1817.

Mr. Calhoon is certainly a man of fine talents, and altho he has never given us evidences of his possessing great military talents, yet give him time to become acquainted with the duties of his office and I have no doubt but he will make an able Secretary.

I have been a good deal indisposed for several days; but I think, at present, I am on the mend. I hope I shall be able to leave here in a few days, for home; and I can assure you I dont care how soon: I would give almost any thing to see my sweet little daughter, my dear little Mary Ann. I had the honor of dining with the president a few days since; he informed me that he had just recd. a letter from you. He and Mrs. Monroe appear to be in very fine health: the latter I think very handsome for a lady of her age. 4

4 Forty-nine.

Give my compliments to Mrs. Jackson and believe me to be

Yours Sincerely